

**DEPARTMENT OF LAND SERVICES**

EQUALIZATION, LAND MANAGEMENT, GIS MAPPING,  
PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,  
BROWNFIELD REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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January 22, 2014

Mr. Don West  
Environmental Management Support, Inc.  
8601 Georgia Avenue, Suite 500  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
Phone: (301) 589-5318

**Re: U.S. EPA Brownfield Hazardous Substances and Petroleum Assessment Grant Proposal  
Van Buren County, Michigan, RFP No: EPA-OSWER-OBLR-13-05**

Dear Mr. West:

The Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (VBCBRA) appreciates the opportunity to submit this proposal for a \$200,000 Petroleum Assessment Grant and a \$200,000 Hazardous Substances, Community-Wide Assessment Grant. Van Buren County (population – 75,454, 2012 U.S. Census estimate) is located in Southwest Michigan, approximately 125 miles from Chicago and 155 miles from Detroit, bounded to the west by Lake Michigan. The County, through its Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, views this grant as an opportunity to continue to provide Brownfield Redevelopment assistance to its 18 Townships, four Cities, and seven Villages that lack the resources to actively engage in this process.

As a result of the economy, the State of Michigan, including Van Buren County, has been severely affected. According to the Michigan Department of Technology, Management, and Budget, Michigan's unemployment rate was 9.4% in August 2012. Van Buren County's unemployment rate nearly matches the state of Michigan's average at 8.7% (<http://www.michigan.gov/dmb>). State budgets have been decimated and funding for environmental activities is becoming scarce, if not virtually nonexistent. Local communities are desperate for support with economic development initiatives that encourages the reuse of existing industrial areas and infrastructure, and the creation of jobs for its residents.

Since its inception in 1829, Van Buren County's economy has relied heavily on agriculture and more recently, on industry. Our two main business corridors (and target areas), South Haven and Paw Paw, have both seen drastic declines in industrial growth, leaving residents out of jobs, a legacy of vacant, contaminated sites, and a depressed local economy. With many sites within our target communities and across the County, the Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority desperately needs funding to continue the successes that have been seen to date for the sake of our jobless communities. According to WARN (Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification), there have been 690 layoffs from closing industrial facilities since 2007 ([milmi.org](http://milmi.org)). Van Buren County has successfully received and expended two assessment grants; 2007 (Petroleum), 2009 (Hazardous Substances), and continue to draw funds on a 2010 (Petroleum) assessment grant. Through the County, the VBCRA has proven our ability to utilize these resources fully and leverage other resources.

The following application will demonstrate the Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority's efforts to create a collaborative, effective and efficient program that is focused on results that benefit all populations and communities. The Grant dollars received by Van Buren County to date have been thoughtfully used to create exciting new opportunities for its citizens. However, without the financial

assistance offered through a new Petroleum and Hazardous Substance Assessment Grant, the County's Brownfield program will only have limited success due to the number of sites that remain to be addressed. The EPA Grants offer a strategic means of benefiting struggling communities in a struggling state and we look forward to continuing our successful program.

The Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority also looks forward to partnering with several community-based organizations to accomplish the objectives of the EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant funds. The local Chambers of Commerce, Southwest Michigan First, Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, The Van Buren Conservation District, The Village of Paw Paw and Paw Paw DDA, The Village of Hartford, The City of South Haven, Telamon Corporation and the Van Buren Intermediate School District (VBISD) have all given their written support to help achieve the goals of the Assessment Grant funds. These community-based organizations will be a vital aspect to enhance the established brownfield program in the Van Buren County community.

By receiving these Brownfield Assessment Grant funds, the VBCBRA hopes to continue to improve the quality of life for our community as a whole. We thank you for your time and consideration of our grant request. If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Respectfully submitted



Edward K. VanderVries  
Director of Land Services

A. Applicant Identification:	Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority	F. ii. County Administrator:	Douglas Cultra
	219 E. Paw Paw St., Suite 303 Paw Paw, MI 49079		219 E. Paw Paw St., Suite 303, Paw Paw MI 49079
B. DUNS Number:	074305459		
C. Funding Requested:		Phone:	(269) 657-8253
i.. Grant Type:	Assessment Grant	Fax:	(269) 657-2547
ii. Federal Funds Requested	\$400,000	Email:	cultrad@vbco.org
iii. Contamination	Hazardous Substances (\$200,000) and Petroleum (\$200,000)	G. Date Submitted:	January 22, 2014
iv. Community-Wide	Community-wide	H. Project Period:	Three years
D. Location:	Van Buren County	I. Population:	Van Buren County- 75,454 (2012 U.S. Census Estimate)
E. Not Applicable			
F. i. Project Director:	Edward K. VanderVries		
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## RANKING CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT GRANTS

### 1. Community Need

#### a. Targeted Community and Brownfields

##### a.i Targeted Community Description

Van Buren County is located in Southwest Michigan, approximately 125 miles from Chicago, 155 miles from Detroit, and bounded to the west by Lake Michigan. Most of the county is farmland dotted with small towns, watersheds, rivers, lakes and streams. The largest communities are the **City of South Haven**, with a population of 4,403 (usa.com); the **Village of Paw Paw**, 3,453 (usa.com), and smaller communities in the County such as the Village of Mattawan, 1,997 (usa.com); and the City of Hartford, 2,688 (usa.com). These four communities comprise only about 16.5% of Van Buren County's total population of 75,454 (2012 U.S. Census estimate; 1% decrease from 2011 estimate), an indication of its rural nature. Van Buren's population density as of the 2010 census was 124 people per square mile, as opposed to the statewide average of 175 per square mile (2010 U.S. Census Bureau).

Although much of Van Buren County's land area is rural and agricultural, it holds an industrial past on the shores of Lake Michigan and the County's interior communities. Like much of Michigan, Van Buren County has seen a decline in manufacturing plants and jobs, which has led to a significant decline in the tax structure and participation from interested developers. Two **targeted communities** have been identified in support of this Application: Commercial Avenue and Industrial Street (Census Tract 11800) in the **Village of Paw Paw**; and the Eagle Street (Census Tract: 10400) site in the **City of South Haven**.

##### a.ii Demographic Information

	Census Tract Info (South Haven / Paw Paw Target Area)	Targeted Community (City of South Haven/Village of Paw Paw)	Van Buren County	Statewide	National
Population	2,094 <sup>4</sup> /7,001 <sup>4</sup>	4,403 <sup>4</sup> /3,453 <sup>4</sup>	75,454 <sup>1</sup>	9,883,640 <sup>1</sup>	308,745,538 <sup>1</sup>
Unemployment	2% <sup>4</sup> /8.1% <sup>4</sup>	1.8% <sup>4</sup> /11.3% <sup>4</sup>	8.12% <sup>4</sup>	8.78% <sup>2</sup>	7.2% <sup>2</sup>
Poverty Rate	7.5% <sup>4</sup> /19.56% <sup>4</sup>	19.9% <sup>5</sup> /12.2% <sup>6</sup>	21.5% <sup>5</sup>	17.5% <sup>2</sup>	15.1% <sup>3</sup>
Percent Minority	8.1% <sup>4</sup> /13.26% <sup>4</sup>	18.31% <sup>4</sup> /7.70% <sup>4</sup>	13.28% <sup>4</sup>	25.4% <sup>4</sup>	26.7% <sup>1</sup>
Median Household Income	\$51,667 <sup>4</sup> /\$40,625 <sup>4</sup>	\$44,435 <sup>4</sup> /\$28,869 <sup>4</sup>	\$44,435 <sup>4</sup>	\$48,471 <sup>1</sup>	\$ 49,445 <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Data is from the 2010 U.S. Census data and is available at [www.census.gov/](http://www.census.gov/)

<sup>2</sup>Data is from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and is available at [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)

<sup>3</sup>Data is from the 2010 American Community Survey and is available at <http://www.census.gov/newsroom/>

<sup>4</sup>Data is calculated from 2010 Statistics on [www.usa.com](http://www.usa.com)

<sup>5</sup>Data is from United States Department of Agriculture at [www.ers.usda.gov](http://www.ers.usda.gov)

<sup>6</sup>Data is from City-Data (2005-2009 Information) [www.city-data.com/poverty](http://www.city-data.com/poverty)

##### a.iii Brownfields

Communities in our **target areas** of the City of South Haven and the Village of Paw Paw have been directly impacted by economic downturn/job loss due to contaminated properties. The County faces a grim economic future due to aging infrastructure, decline in property values, job loss and environmental concerns in the **target communities**; which are the economic hubs, or most populous centers of the County. The MDEQ Inventory of Facilities (sites of known contamination) identifies 359 listings for Van Buren County. The City of South Haven has 135 listings or 37% of the County's inventoried sites. The Village of Paw Paw is identified with 73 listings or 20% of the County's inventoried sites; which pose an inherently large risk of contamination to surrounding areas and have led to **disproportionate**

**environmental impacts** affecting the surrounding communities. Known contaminants include both hazardous substance and petroleum products such as trichloroethylene and toluene that have had an effect on terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems in the **target communities** and are known to cause cancer and other health problems. These harmful substances create an unhealthy living environment, riddled with blighted hazardous buildings, and are roadblocks for redevelopment.

The **Village of Paw Paw** target community is generally bound to the west by the Paw Paw River and has been utilized for various industrial and commercial operations for several decades. The **City of South Haven** target area is currently focused on Eagle St., a vital commercial corridor in the downtown area. Previously completed assessment activities in both target areas have identified trichloroethylene and dehalogenation daughter compounds in soil and groundwater at concentrations that represent a concern for the potential volatilization of contaminants to indoor air and resulting unacceptable health exposures. The shallow depth to groundwater (< 3 meters) in both target areas increases the potential for unacceptable health exposures and highlights the need for further assessment to determine the nature of appropriate response activities. The Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (VBCBRA: Applicant) has identified these two target areas for use of the assessment grant funding, if awarded, to minimize, reduce, and/or eliminate exposure pathways.

#### **a.iv Cumulative Environmental Issues**

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) Water Well Viewer identified more than 6 private water wells in the South Haven Target Area and 20 private water wells in the Paw Paw target area with direct proximity to sources of contamination. Contaminated groundwater plumes in these target areas also have potential to transport volatile chemicals and emit vapors through subsurface soil and into indoor air spaces. Vapors may accumulate in occupied buildings, contaminate air quality and pose risks of chronic effects from long-term exposure. Adding to the adverse health effects in the target areas, blighted structures likely contain asbestos materials and lead based paints and, due to their deteriorated and unsecure nature it is very possible for neighborhood residents (especially children) to have unsafe access to these structures. The threat from hazardous substances associated with vacant buildings in the target areas has major repercussions on the welfare of the residents.

#### **b. Impacts on Targeted Community**

The environmental health of these sites harm the air, water, and soil quality of the surrounding areas, and in addition to the blight and potential contamination associated with defunct commercial and industrial sites, the **target communities** have lost tax revenues, decreased property values and resulted in a loss of jobs, which formerly supported quality of life for its citizens. Many of the communities surrounding the **target areas** are at the front lines of the brownfield sites in the area.

The target communities' **sensitive populations** include children under the age of five (5.41%/6.71%), persons under the age of 19 (22.54%/19.81%) and persons older than 65 (22.46%/13.84%) in Van Buren County (USA.COM). Many of the **sensitive populations** are vulnerable to contaminant exposure and more susceptible to adverse health effects as a result of exposure within the **target communities**. Many Michigan communities are experiencing an aging workforce and population. "The age 55 and older group was the only group to grow in numbers of workers. The age 29 or younger category and age 30 to 54 category shrank." (2012 Community Action Plan: SW Michigan Planning Commission). These substances have many different ways of transportation such as; groundwater, stormwater run-off, particulate inhalation, and vapor intrusion. These issues can be point (identified) or non-point (unidentified) sources of pollution, but all adversely affect surrounding communities. Both of the **target areas** are in close proximity to bodies of water, such as Lake Michigan, the Black River, the Paw Paw River, Maple Lake, Ackley Lake and various rivers, streams, watersheds, and underground water sources. Bodies of water bounded by development and industrial sites are more vulnerable to water quality degradation, since pollution transport may be increased and negatively affected by these sites. Many small

inland lakes (i.e., less than 300 acres) are inherently vulnerable to nutrient and pollutant inputs due to reduced water volume and small surface area. Due to the reduction in surface area these smaller bodies of water (excepting Lake Michigan at 22,300 sq. mi.) are highly sensitive to changes of water quality from watershed influences. These contaminated sites have impacted area soils and groundwater sources, many of which pose serious risk to nearby populations and have been demonstrated to be migrating. There have been 371.6 incidences of cancer among Van Buren County residents between 2005-2009 (Michigan Department of Community Health, August 2012) raising concern about the proximity and nature of the sites that contain these cancer-causing substances in relation to adjacent communities. Van Buren County also has approximately 61 hospitalizations each year for asthma-related issues and a total of 6,926 persons with asthma (Asthma Initiative of Michigan). The below listed (Table 1) target areas are located in close proximity to residential neighborhoods, schools and bodies of water and are negatively impacting sensitive populations (minorities, women, children, and elderly persons) by potentially exposing them to numerous contaminants from direct contact, airborne, particulate inhalation, and vapor intrusion pathways and have potentially negatively impacted the **health of the community**. Some residents of Paw Paw and South Haven rely on groundwater for their drinking water supply. Short and long-term exposure to these contaminants causes damage to central nervous system, damage to respiratory system, and increased cancer risk.

Site Examples/Locations	Contaminants <sup>1</sup>	Health Effects <sup>2</sup>
<b>Paw Paw Target Area</b>		
-Commercial Avenue & Industrial Street	Benzene, Toluene, Xylenes, PNA's, chlorinated solvents (PCE, TCE, vinyl chloride), cadmium, nickel, naphthalene, phantherene	damage to central nervous system and respiratory system, liver/kidney damage, dizziness, increased cancer risk. Skin Irritation, damage to central nervous system, liver/kidney damage, renal shutdown, Corneal damage
<b>South Haven Target Area</b>		
-Eagle St. Area	Chlorinated solvents (PCE, TCE and dehalogenation daughter compounds.	irritated eyes and skin, damage to central nervous system, effected respiratory system, gastro-intestinal tract, liver/kidney damage, gingival issues, abdominal pain, anemia, increased cancer risk.

<sup>1</sup>Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Part 201 and 213 List

<sup>2</sup>Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry Toxicological Profiles

### **c Financial Need**

#### **c.i Economic Conditions**

With the economy in decline over the last decade, much of the former population has relocated and has been replaced by lower-income and minority families and individuals. Van Buren County has minority populations that include 3,100 (or roughly 4%) African-Americans, and 7,758 (or roughly 10.5%) of its residents are of Hispanic descent (www.usa.com). Based on data collected from USA.com, approximately 11,000 permanent residents in Van Buren County live in poverty. Additionally, 10% of families live in poverty county-wide. In a 2006 report on "Client Need Assessment," the Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency (SMCAA) said that over 50% of the respondents cited "not enough jobs in the county" as the biggest barrier to employment, and also cited that the second and third most common barriers to employment were transportation and lack of job skills (SMCAA "Community Survey" 2006). According to the Michigan Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Development's WARN (Worker Adjustment

Retraining Notification) data from 2009 through 2013 Van Buren County has lost 832 employees through industrial layoffs associated with multiple plant closures

In June 2009, Michigan Work's! *Automotive Manufacturing Tri-County Impact Report* for Van Buren, Cass, and Berrien Counties reported that 43.7% of local business employers were planning layoffs, and 35.4% of these companies, which currently employ 1,704 residents, stated the layoffs would occur by December 2009. With job opportunities steadily shrinking in the County, residents have had to seek employment elsewhere. According to the *Labor Market Area Source: Michigan Employment Service Agency*, 50% of Van Buren County community members have been forced to work outside the county and it is imperative that the County creates new jobs for its residents to keep them contributing to, and ultimately improving, the local economy.

#### **c.ii Economic Effects on Brownfields**

Communities in our **target areas** of the City of South Haven and the Village of Paw Paw have been directly impacted by economic downturn/job loss due to contaminated properties. According to the 2012 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southwest Michigan, "Van Buren County lost jobs that earned \$1,250 per month or less and \$1,251 to \$3,333 per month...and had a net loss of \$1,399 jobs that earned \$1,250 per month or less and lost 976 jobs that earned \$1,251 to \$3,333 dollars per month." Van Buren County experiences a net loss of 4.3% in its cities and a 4.5% population loss in its villages. These metrics can be attributed to an almost 10% loss in the total workforce population since 2002. (2012 Community Action Plan: SW Michigan Planning Commission) The County faces a grim economic future due to aging infrastructure, decline in property values, job loss and environmental concerns in the **target communities**.

In Van Buren County tax revenues from properties are decreasing due to slowed expansion, closing businesses and decreasing property values. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) has been extremely successful in the state of Michigan when private funding is available. These incentives stimulate economic growth in communities that have successful Brownfield Redevelopment Programs. The State of Michigan has one of the best Brownfield programs in the nation. However, with Michigan's lagging economy and the State's dwindling funds, the County is relying on private investment to redevelop sites, and this private investment is very limited. Without assistance from the State of Michigan, Van Buren County relies solely on assistance from EPA's Brownfield Program. Funding will provide resources that will support private investment for continuing redevelopment.

The contaminant conditions identified in the target communities have resulted in decreased economic activity (fewer property transactions/redevelopments) due to the uncertainty associated with environmental concerns. In particular, the uncertainty regarding the potential need for mitigation measures and controls relative to the volatilization of contaminants to indoor air has represented a "walk away" condition for prospective purchasers/redevelopers on multiple parcels within the target areas. The proposed assessment grant funding would be utilized to assess contaminant conditions, in particular the vapor intrusion pathway, within the target communities in order to provide information critical to the understanding of appropriate mitigation and control measures that may be necessary to prevent unacceptable health exposures. The removal of this uncertainty through assessment will result in increased investment and economic activity.

## **2 Project Description and Feasibility of Success**

### **2.a Project Description**

#### **2.a.i Project Description**

The Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (VBCBRA) is requesting, through this application, to receive a \$200,000 Community-Wide Petroleum Assessment Grant and a \$200,000 Community-Wide Hazardous Substances Assessment Grant. The Grant funding will be used to conduct Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) and Community Outreach for eligible sites.

If sites are contaminated, then funds would be used to complete Baseline Environmental Assessments (BEAs), Due Care Plans, and potentially, cleanup planning in the **target areas**. Since Michigan allows, through a Brownfield Plan, the capture tax increment from new investment on properties the grant funds can be leveraged through the completion of Brownfield Plans. The tax increment captured through a Brownfield Plan can be used to conduct eligible activities at sites throughout the County.

The **County's plan** is to assess the **target areas** by addressing issues that cause deterioration of properties in an effort to revitalize the community and enhance economic development. However, the County's diminishing budget cannot support the plans. The County has been negatively impacted by the aging infrastructure, decline in property values, inefficient transportation within the target areas, and weakness in the central business core. Brownfield sites in the target areas complicated by environmental contaminants are challenging to redevelop, but provide an opportunity for the County to promote sustainable redevelopment with existing infrastructure. In working with the existing **City/Village master, and comprehensive "Plans,"** the **target communities** will be able to continue to host visioning sessions and meetings to discuss priorities. The County believes that continued efforts to remove blight, control environmental contaminants exposures, and bring development to areas that have seen drastic declines supports the initiatives for a better Van Buren County as outlined in Master Plans, Visioning Sessions, and Strategic Plans.

Priority Site/Area	Redevelopment Benefits
Village of Paw Paw Industrial Avenue/Commercial Avenue	Re-use of idled buildings/properties and/or blight reduction. Job Opportunities, private investment, increased tax revenues, preservation of green space, mitigation of environmental exposure to contaminants, improvement of adjacent Paw Paw River water quality and improved access to River for tourism.
Eagle St. Area	Re-use of idled building/property and/or blight reduction. Job Opportunities, private investment, increased tax revenues, preservation of green space, mitigation of environmental exposures to contaminants, reduce environmental uncertainty in support of increasing economic activity. Increased tourism.

The **proposed project** will work to fulfill identified areas of environmental consideration and address issues that are important to the surrounding community's planning efforts. Some of the issues addressed in the various **planning processes** include industrial area redevelopment, downtown business growth, employment, water quality and increased public access to water resources, transportation, and land planning. Each of our **target communities** has recent master plans that will be approached and tracked accordingly depending on budgets and leveraging.

The **City of South Haven** and the VCBRA have identified the Eagle St. Area as a priority for assessment. The Eagle St. Area is located within a vital downtown business district in South Haven. The area is generally bound by Huron St. to the south and the Black River located approximately 460 feet hydraulically downgradient (NW) of the Eagle St. area. Limited previously completed assessment activities have resulted in the identification of volatile halocarbons (i.e., perchloroethylene, trichloroethylene and daughter compounds) in soil and groundwater across multiple parcels and public right-of-ways within this area at concentrations that represent a concern for unacceptable health exposures relative to the volatilization of contaminants to indoor air. The shallow depth to groundwater (<3 meters) and proximity of the Black River increase the potential for unacceptable health exposures. The identified contaminant conditions represent a potential that unacceptable health exposures are currently occurring that warrant further assessment. The uncertainty regarding the full nature/extent of contaminant conditions has resulted in reluctance on behalf of prospective purchasers/developers to proceed with property transactions in the

area. In particular, the uncertainty regarding the need for mitigation measures and controls relative to the potential volatilization of contaminants to indoor air has had a dampening effect on economic activity in this vital commercial area. The VCBRA has collaborated with the City of South Haven and an owner of multiple parcels within the Eagle St. Area who has committed to providing access. The VCBRA and the City of South Haven have additionally engaged in discussions with the MDEQ regarding the potential subsequent leveraging of State funds for additional characterization and mitigation pending the results of proposed assessment activities to be funded through this application.

In the Village of Paw Paw **target area**, the VCBRA will use grant funds to assess, characterize, and conduct planning events related to the brownfield sites in the area. The geographic target area is defined as the Industrial Ave. and Commercial Ave. corridors from Kalamazoo St. (M-40) west to the Paw Paw River. The site is bound to the north by Lily St. and the south by Ampey Rd. This historically industrial area contains multiple sites of known environmental impact including: Paw Paw Plating (electroplating), Duo-Tang (paper products), Paw Paw Press (commercial printing), Production Rubber Products, Kalamazoo Lakeshore/Chicago Railroad, The Basket Factory, LaBadie Oil, and others. The U.S. EPA conducted response activities at the former Paw Paw Plating site (139 Commercial Ave.) including the removal of plating equipment and the remediation (excavation) of soils. Additionally, the MDEQ funded the completion of vapor intrusion mitigation measures within select offsite private residences located immediately north of the target area. The need for mitigation measures is based upon the concentrations of volatile halocarbons (primarily trichloroethylene) in soil and shallow groundwater. In June 2012 the EPA's Technical Assistance to Brownfields Program (TAB), which is operated by the Kansas State University Extension Program, worked in conjunction with the Village of Paw Paw and the VCBRA and hosted a visioning session to gather inputs regarding redevelopment goals/objectives for the community within the target area. The output of the visioning session focused on the redevelopment of this area with priorities including: a community center; mixed residential/light commercial occupancy; connectivity/walkability to commercial/residential corridors located north of the target area; preservation of green space and increased access to the Paw Paw River. In response to the visioning session with residents, the Village has amended its Land Use Plan and Zoning ordinances and is working with the DDA to assist in realization of the vision. If awarded, the grant funding will be a major player revitalizing the community in correspondence with these community visions. Grant funds will support refining this vision through continued community outreach and additionally will be pivotal in assessing contaminant conditions within the target area to ensure redevelopment does not result in unacceptable health exposures or an exacerbation of contaminant conditions.

#### **2.a.ii Project Management Approach**

The VCBRA, and a qualified environmental consultant will lead a community-oriented Assessment Grant project to support the revitalization of brownfields in the target areas, as well as programmatic and reporting requirements. The Director of Land Services and VCBRA Board member Edward VanderVries will act as a **project manager** and provide guidance on how to best use grant funds, and leverage additional funding sources, to promote revitalization. The VCBRA will incorporate operations such as; updating and maintaining brownfields inventory; distributing information about the projects to the community; engaging community groups and neighborhood members; selecting sites for assessment; and tracking project **progress**. The VCBRA will be responsible for procuring all contractual services (e.g., environmental consultants), submittal of reports to the U.S. EPA, and managing the brownfield data in the County GIS database.

Brownfield Redevelopment in the County of Van Buren is recognized as a crucial tool to "remake" a community into one that is vibrant, clean, and prosperous. Understanding these outputs through implementation of our program demonstrates to our stakeholders that we are making a difference in our community. Short-term outcomes/outputs include assessing sites through the completion of Phase I and II



ESAs, BEAs, and Due Care plans which create a greater opportunity for successful redevelopment. Long-term outcomes/outputs include the revitalization of environmentally distressed areas throughout Van Buren County, while supporting job creation, tax base enhancement, and elimination of contaminated properties and their associated risk. The VCBRA will constantly monitor and engage community redevelopment efforts so that this program continues to grow and become stronger.

### **2.a.iii Site Selection**

The VCBRA will allocate funds to maintain and expand a comprehensive inventory of potential brownfield sites to better understand the environmental challenges present in the community. This will be completed with the help of the State's databases, local units of government, various community members, local businesses and a qualified environmental consultant. The VCBRA will develop criteria to score a site for **prioritization** with consideration of community benefits. An application for prospective purchasers, property owners, local units of government, etc, will be publically available and will require the applicant to identify property address, known past uses of the property, zoning, environmental issues, project description, funding necessary, and assessment needed. This will help **select** projects that will not be complicated by ownership issues. The application will serve as a "background check," with some preliminary information. The application will also allow the VCBRA to understand the developers/purchasers interest in sustainability features, creation of greenspace, energy conservations measures, alternative energy techniques, interest in the Brownfield Program, and ability to leverage additional funding.

## **2.b Task Description and Budget Table**

### **2.b.i Task Description**

#### **Task 1: Site Inventory and Prioritization (\$4,500/\$4,500)**

Limited funds have been allocated to this task since petroleum and hazardous substances sites have been inventoried using the County's previous Assessment Grant Funds, State databases and other information. However, in conjunction with our grant partners, the VCBRA, various neighborhood and community organizations, local businesses, a qualified environmental consultant, and the MDEQ, the inventoried sites will be updated and presented for **input**. Additionally, a site survey questionnaire will be made available to solicit other potential sites that should be included in the inventory. Within the targeted communities the updated list of sites will be prioritized as to risk to the residents, eligibility, allowed access, potential for redevelopment or job creation and other beneficial uses such as green space.

#### **Task 2: Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (\$20,000/\$20,000)**

Conduct Phase I ESAs following American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) and All Appropriate Inquiry standards using a qualified environmental consultant. The Budget estimates the completion of approximately eight (8) Phase I ESAs at an average cost of \$2,500 for both the Hazardous Substance Grant and the Petroleum Grant.

#### **Task 3: Phase II ESAs and Baseline Environmental Assessments (BEAs): (\$128,000/\$128,000)**

Conduct Phase II ESAs at identified brownfield sites following ASTM standards using a qualified environmental consultant. For selected sites with appropriate levels of contamination, BEAs for liability protection and Due Care Plans to address "continuing obligations" following MDEQ guidance as agreed in the Brownfield Memorandum of Agreement between EPA and the State of Michigan, will be completed using a qualified environmental consultant. This task will also include preparation of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), Sampling and Analysis Plans and development of Health and Safety Plans. The budget assumes eight (8) Phase II ESAs (including BEAs and Due Care Plans) at an average cost of \$16,000 to be completed utilizing the Hazardous Substances grant. The budget assumes eight (8) Phase II ESAs (including BEAs and Due Care Plans) at an average cost of \$16,000 to be completed utilizing the Petroleum grant. **It is proposed that 64% of the grant funds will be used for Phase II ESAs.**

**Task 4: Brownfield Plans and Cleanup Planning (\$28,000/\$28,000)**

Prepare Brownfield Plans to utilize tax increment financing. These plans would be reviewed by the VBCBRA, submitted to the local unit of government in which the project site is located for approval, and recommended for adoption by the Van Buren County Board of Commissioners following a public hearing. Cleanup Planning may encompass feasibility reviews and site control alternatives. Both the Hazardous Substances and the Petroleum Assessment grant budget assumes four (4) projects will require Brownfield Plans at \$4,000 each, three (3) of which will also require Act 381 Work Plans at a cost of \$4,000 each.

**Task 5: Community Outreach, Programmatic Expenses and Travel: (\$19,500/\$19,500)**

This task involves activities related to community outreach including: Prepare for, attend, and participate in public hearings, municipal meetings at townships, villages, and cities within the County, County Brownfield Authority and Commission meetings; review Brownfield Plans, Work Plans, and Report Recommendations; plan and prepare materials for meetings; create and disseminate brochures about the Brownfield Grant and County resources; work with the grant partners, who will be assisting with the educational and outreach component; educate and inform community group, realtors, developers and interested parties about the Grant and the benefits of Brownfield Redevelopment; conduct community Open Houses, receptions, and success celebrations; and register/travel to the National Brownfield Conference

**2.b.ii Budget Table****HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES ASSESSMENT GRANT**

<b>Budget Categories</b>	<b>Project Tasks</b>					
(programmatic costs only)	Task 1 Site Inventory and Prioritization	Task 2 Phase I Environmental Assessments	Task 3 Phase II ESA's and BEA's	Task 4 Brownfield Plans and Cleanup Plans	Task 5 Community Outreach, Programmatic Expenses and Travel	Total
Personnel	1,000				9,000	10,000
Travel <sup>1</sup>	500				2,500	3,000
Equipment <sup>2</sup>						
Supplies					2,000	2,000
Contractual <sup>3</sup>	3,000	20,000	128,000	28,000	6,000	185,000
Other (Specify)						
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,500</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>128,000</b>	<b>28,000</b>	<b>19,500</b>	<b>200,000</b>

**PETROLEUM ASSESSMENT GRANT**

<b>Budget Categories</b>	<b>Project Tasks</b>					
(programmatic costs only)	Task 1 Site Inventory and Prioritization	Task 2 Phase I Environmental Assessments	Task 3 Phase II ESA's and BEA's	Task 4 Brownfield Plans and Cleanup Plans	Task 5 Community Outreach, Programmatic Expenses and Travel	Total
Personnel	1,000				9,000	10,000
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Other (Specify)						
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,500</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>128,000</b>	<b>28,000</b>	<b>19,500</b>	<b>200,000</b>

### **2.c Ability to Leverage**

Michigan Brownfield Laws allow the VCBRA to develop Brownfield Plans for eligible project sites. The Plans will capture future tax increment from new investment. The VCBRA has committed to utilize funds generated through the preparation of Brownfield Plans to complete eligible activities within the target communities and throughout Van Buren County. The eligible activities; such as Phase I/Phase II ESAs, BEAs, Due Care Plans, demolition, soil and groundwater cleanup, and lead and asbestos abatement become more achievable through TIF leveraging. For instance, a developer may approach the VCBRA to utilize EPA Grant funds to conduct the Phase I and Phase II ESAs, BEA and Due Care planning. The developer would incur additional expenses such as soil removal and disposal and demolition with the understanding that they would be reimbursed for their expense as the tax increment from the new development is collected over time. Finally, the VCBRA can use the tax increment capture from the project to repay the EPA Grant funds invested in the project and the VCBRA can capture tax increment another five full years. This fund, the Local Site Remediation Revolving Fund (LSRRF), is locally funded and can only be used for eligible activities on other brownfield sites. The VCBRA has pledged to use existing and future LSRRF funds to complete eligible activities throughout Van Buren County. Thus, the grant monies would truly act as seed money to leverage future brownfield redevelopment activities. This will help the VCBRA create a sustainable program.

If needed and if available, the County can petition the MDEQ to consider utilizing state grant and loan dollars through the district office to take actions to remediate or control sites. Depending upon the location and scale of the redevelopment project, other funds could be used to leverage the grant monies. This could include public sources: tax abatements, Community Development Block Grants, etc., or support from private sources. Where appropriate, the VCBRA may also have developers share the cost of certain environmental assessment activities. The VCBRA has developed guidelines to screen projects that come before the Authority. This process will allow input where issues such as protection of the public health and environment, preservation of farmland and open space, sustainable development practices and other considerations can be made a potential condition for use of funds. This enhances the development, which helps meet the overall goals of this program.

### **3. Community Engagement and Partnerships**

#### **3.a Plan for Involving Targeted Community and Other Stakeholders and Communicating Project Progress**

As Van Buren County seeks to recover from the slow economic times that have put the **target communities'** businesses and environment at risk, it is imperative that the redevelopment of these **target areas** contains a high level of community **input**. Participation from the residents of the City of South Haven and Village of Paw Paw target areas have been, are and will continue to be of great importance. Many strides have already been taken in developing plans for these communities. Past visioning sessions were held to discuss issues in the **target areas**. In the Village of Paw Paw, 35 participants assisted in a discussion to produce a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis and developed planning principles for the target area. This included several meetings with the group and follow-up activities by the planning commission, DDA and Village Board. For the City of South Haven target area, City, City BRA, property owners and tenants, and the MDEQ are already at the table discussing issues to be addressed and potential resolutions. Activities like this will continue under **Task 5** in the budget and are of crucial importance to leverage the work already completed. During the project, citizens and community organizations will have ample opportunity to become informed and provide input on developments during the revitalization. The VCBRA plans to continue to engage local leaders, residents, community organizations, and local businesses during area-wide planning activities in their respective communities, accomplishing this through existing relationships and support from partners. As part of the outreach

program, meetings with supporting communities, grant partners, etc., will discuss the grants and provide an opportunity to learn more about brownfield challenges and opportunities.

Additionally, the VBCBRA has partnered with several organizations to assist with brownfield awareness, education and planning. These include: the Van Buren Intermediate School District (VBISD), which manages many programs that educate and support area residents, businesses, industry, schools and minority groups; the Telamon Corporation, which interacts with the Hispanic/Latino population, especially helping farm workers move toward more self-sufficient employment; the Southwest Michigan Planning Council, who helps local governments with planning open space, trails, farmland preservation and watershed management programs; Southwest Michigan First, a regional economic development organization and several area Chambers of Commerce.

The VBCBRA regularly provides stakeholder updates as to the progress that the Brownfield Program has made and future plans for additional projects. The VBCBRA has worked with the VBISD to educate the community through a regional economic development forum that was attended by area residents, businesses, local governmental units, and others. The VBCBRA has met with Township Supervisors and/or City/Village Managers with all municipalities within Van Buren County to help them identify brownfield sites within their communities. The Authority has published press releases and articles in various local newspapers to educate the County's citizens. The *South Haven Tribune* and the *Paw Paw Courier Leader* have the largest circulation in the County. The County also used and will continue to use media that assists with communicating to the Latino population, such as the newspaper *Nueva Opinion*, widely read by Latinos in southwest Michigan, and the "Tejano-Mex Super Show" (FM 103.7), a radio program with news and music for the Latino community. Van Buren typically uses these publications to disseminate their public notices and press releases to the County-wide population. The VBCBRA has also published trifold documents on the VBCBRA in Spanish. Likewise, the VBCBRA completed an informative video in English and Spanish on the VBCBRA and the tools and resources that are available. We also publicize programs and successes through newsletters, the County Website ([www.vbco.com](http://www.vbco.com)), inserts, accompanying tax and utility bills, and have considered exploring new forms of social networking.

The VBCBRA meets monthly on a regularly scheduled date to review and approve projects, solicit public comment and plan for future activities. Currently, the VBCBRA is planning a community-wide open house, including a representative from the MDEQ, to discuss redevelopment alternatives and strategies for using additional funding available from the State for the Paw Paw and South Haven **Target Areas**. This open house will allow realtors, developers, local units of government, neighborhood groups and other affected stakeholders an opportunity to understand the distribution of sites within their community, solicit other sites and educate attendees on the merits of redevelopment and the tools and resources available.

### **3.b Partnerships with Government Agencies**

#### **3.b.i Partnerships with Local/State/Tribal Environmental and Health Agencies**

This proposal is requesting funds to complete Phase I and II ESAs, BEAs and Brownfield Plans/Cleanup Planning. All of these activities will meet the requirements of the Michigan Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act and the Michigan NREPA. This will involve review and approval of Due Care plans by the MDEQ so that they meet regulatory requirements in identifying all potential exposure pathways to insure that all future users are not exposed, and that measures are taken not to exacerbate contamination. Additionally, one of the actions a new owner may take is to put natural resource use restrictions on the property deed and notice to the local unit of government. If any of these activities occur through a Brownfield Plan, it will require review and approval from the County Brownfield Authority and the County Commission upon completion of a public hearing. If school taxes will be captured through a Brownfield Plan it will be necessary for MDEQ/MSF (demolition) to review and approve the plan. Throughout the brownfield redevelopment process, there are many opportunities for public scrutiny, input,

awareness and regulatory reviews and approvals. This ensures that protection of the public health and the environment will be verifiable and accountable.

Since the MDEQ in many situations has access to a significant amount of information about sites within the community, the VBCBRA intends to engage with the MDEQ to solicit input and obtain relevant information that may benefit our program. Representatives from the VBCBRA met with District MDEQ representatives to review our program and the progress made to date; by strengthening this relationship, the MDEQ can advise the VBCBRA of additional funding opportunities that may assist with eligible activities beyond the EPA Assessment Grants.

### **3.b.ii Partnerships with Other Relevant Federal, State and Local Governmental Agencies**

The VBCBRA has and will continue to obtain the support of its many departments including the Conservation District, the District Public Health Department, Land Management and the Planning Community Development Department. For instance, the Planning and Community Development Department will provide their GIS Mapping Services to map brownfield sites and project successes placing the information on the County's website. Additionally, the VBCBRA will continue to utilize services and potential funding available from the MDEQ

### **3.c Partnerships with Community-Based Organizations**

The following Community-Based Organizations have been actively participating in community-driven projects, redevelopment concepts, notifying the public about brownfield-related events, and have had the ability to leverage jobs, experience, funding, as well as promoting and contributing to sustainable and equitable developments.

#### **Greater Paw Paw Business Network**

The Greater Paw Paw Business Network (GPPBN) will be a valuable resource that can promote business development and opportunities available for potential owners. The GPPBN will be a partner to help educate and reach out to community members. The GPPBN offers opportunities to meet with businesses, market opportunities, and serve as ambassadors for grant opportunities. The GPPBN has offered their website to link to VBCBRA efforts.

#### **Paw Paw Downtown Development Authority Economic Development Committee (DDAED)**

The Village of Paw Paw will be able to notify community stakeholders about job opportunities, and help promote local entrepreneurial activities. The Village can assist through their communication network including direct utility billing for water/sewer, which could include educational flyers. The DDAED will be able to offer community members with sustainable development opportunities and equitable development opportunities. The DDAED has supported communication through the TAB Visioning Group including local residential and business owners, the Planning Commission, and MDEQ with regard to the Paw Paw target area. The DDAED will focus on incorporating the low-income and minority populations in decision-making. The DDAED will also be able to disseminate promotional information about development opportunities.

#### **Southwest Michigan First (SWMF)**

SWMF is a nonprofit, privately owned and publicly funded economic development organization formed by business and community leaders to actively pursue and identify opportunities for development and private investment in the County. SWMF will continue to assist with the marketing of our brownfield sites as they become available for redevelopment. Additionally, SWMF will help communicate the tools that are available through the VBCBRA to developers as they consider properties throughout the County.

#### **Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC)**

The SWMPC will be able to provide information, tools and assistance to communities in making land use decisions. They will team with the County and assess planning initiatives such as; watershed management, water quality, wetlands, trails, greenways, farms and open spaces. The SWMPC will be able to educate various stakeholders about brownfields and how contaminated sites are contributing to environmental health and make sure that brownfield goals are consistent with promoting sustainable development.

#### **Van Buren Intermediate School District (VBISD)**

The VBISD will educate area residents, businesses industry, schools and minority groups and host community outreach events on the benefits of brownfield redevelopment and the various tools and incentives that are available. The VBISD will also translate into Spanish educational materials about brownfield development.

#### **Telamon Corporation**

The Telamon Corporation will be able to provide services to people and communities statewide. The VBCBRA has partnered with the Telamon Corporation to provide educational sessions and workshops that will include the large Hispanic population in redevelopment and provide multi-lingual assistance about the resources and opportunities available for brownfield redevelopment and prospective property owners.

### **4. Project Benefits**

#### **4.a Health and/or Welfare and Environment**

The County envisions working with community partners and a qualified environmental consultant to continue to identify and prioritize brownfield sites that have adverse effects on human health and the environment in the target communities. The VBCBRA will take action to access and assess these sites through Phase I and II ESAs. Lack of sustainable infrastructure and transportation to jobs outside of the target areas severely limits opportunity. Improvement and development of trails in the target areas will support **equitable initiatives and principals** for redevelopment. We strongly hope and believe that by redeveloping these problem areas will create jobs, alleviate environmental justice issues and improve the overall quality of the economic and physical environment.

Job opportunities and income improvement significantly improve **welfare and social benefits** in the target areas. Redeveloping sites provides a clean slate for future development. The welfare of the citizens is dramatically improved by removing blighted property that are attractive nuisances; removing safety and environmental hazards that have a detriment to surrounding areas health. Eliminating or reducing the potential for future exposures to the affected population (fencing, capping, demolition, etc.) may be necessary and would be a **public health benefit**. The VBCBRA and the MDEQ will continue to work with the community under current economic conditions and plan for a brighter future for the County and its residents by supporting a safe environment to live work and play.

#### **4.b Environmental Benefits from Infrastructure Reuse/Sustainable Reuse**

##### **4.b.i Planning, Policies, Ordinances or Other Tools**

Van Buren County is committed to sustainable development/redevelopment. The VBCBRA put policies into place in 2008 that encourage projects that "will reuse vacant or obsolete structures, sustainable, green building design and projects intended for LEED certification". Sustainable development principles include; infilling neighborhoods, using available infrastructure, protecting natural resources, building with low-impact materials, promoting sustainable tourism by trails and waterways, increased walkability, access to public transit, green buildings, energy efficiency, water management, green remediation, construction and demolition materials recycling, diesel emission reduction, and renewable energy on brownfields. We know that our commitment will address sustainable redevelopment and livability principles. If existing buildings are removed, the County will strive to deconstruct as much of the property as possible and work with local vendors to sell reclaimed material and divert it from landfills. While we strive to live "full circle" we view brownfield redevelopment as an opportunity to reach for sustainable measures that reuse existing materials and reduce fossil fuel consumption and emissions. Improvement of air and water quality during and after brownfield redevelopment will drastically improve the quality of life in the surrounding areas. These improvements often have a ripple effect on the surrounding community and have served as a very positive model for community development.

The VBCBRA also intends to submit an application for the U.S. EPA Green Infrastructure Technical Assistance Program to leverage funding towards sustainability measures and to compliment

efforts towards Green Infrastructure Improvements. If funding is not awarded, then these measures will be considered as applicants approach the VBCBRA for funding and as outlined in application in *Site Selection*.

#### **4.b.ii Example of Efforts to Integrate Equitable Development or Livability Principles**

The 2012 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Southwest Michigan has identified an "Action Plan," that will be used when attacking community goals and objectives. By "generating regional interest in the economic development planning topics of developer a workforce pipeline for its unique manufacturing cluster, regional food hub development, and the broader concept of municipalities working together for economic development goals" (2012 SWMPC CEDS) we can easily achieve and integrate equitable development and livability principals.

#### **4.c Economic or Non-Economic Benefits (long term benefits)**

Brownfield redevelopment is a crucial tool for the economy of Van Buren County and revitalization and growth in the future. Brownfield redevelopment will result in benefits for residents in the affected areas, job opportunities, and improvement in the tax base, and preservation and expansion of Van Buren's existing greenspace. The County, through the VBCBRA, intends to capture the improved taxable value from reinvestment on a property for up to five years after the developer's and/or County's eligible activities under a Brownfield Plan have been paid and place it in a Local Site Remediation Revolving Fund. This is a very successful tool established by the Michigan Legislature allowing accumulated dollars to be used throughout the County on other brownfield sites. This sustainable use of leveraged investment allows the community to benefit for years to come. However, it requires several years to generate enough revenue to support future brownfield projects.

In the Van Buren County Comprehensive Plan for 2006-2011 ([www.vbco.org/vbcplan.asp](http://www.vbco.org/vbcplan.asp)), the Planning Commission's *Vision Statement* states "The County will have development that meets the needs of the present without compromising resources necessary for future generations." The commission also developed several *Value Statements* which include: protecting rural character; promoting sustainability development; saving unique natural features; maintaining agricultural heritage; demonstrating respect for local control and ensuring the future quality of life. These statements embody the County's desire to maintain the appropriate population density in rural areas to support farming and focus population in the urban core; thereby preserving farmland and open spaces and reusing infrastructure and brownfields. The Comprehensive Plan assists, encourages, and facilitates local planning efforts especially with respect to coordinated planning that meets the long-term goals of the County residents.

Van Buren County has made great strides in creating opportunities for enjoyment of the natural landscape throughout the County. Efforts to create trailways both on land and water have been discussed above. Additionally, parks, preserves, and other natural areas have been designated and set aside for residents and visitors. These areas include: Van Buren State Park, approximately 400 acres of land along Lake Michigan's Shoreline; The Dunes Parkway, an 84-acre dune preserve in Covert Township along Lake Michigan; Jephtha Lake Fen Preserve, a 49-acre preserve in Columbia Township; Kal-Haven Trail, a multi-use trail converted from an old rail line which runs over 40 miles from Kalamazoo to South Haven, through the Van Buren Trail State Park; Keeler State Game Area, 400 Acres in Keeler Township; Ross Preserve, a 1,440-acre preserve of coastal plain marsh in Covert Township owned by the Nature Conservancy; North Pointe Conservation Area, 17 acres on Lake Michigan, maintained and utilized by the Boy Scouts in southwest Michigan.

#### **4.c.ii Planned Efforts to Promote Local Hiring and Procurement**

According to the Michigan Department of Transportation, Van Buren County has over 500 qualified Disadvantage-Business Enterprise certified firms (MDOT; December 2013); these firms include Minority-Business Enterprise and Women-Business Enterprises. Typically, these firms consist of community residents, and create jobs for community members, incentivize local investment, create partnerships



between organizations and create opportunities. These services include; construction, engineering (civil/environmental), landscaping, media (social, web, print, etc.), transportation, and consulting.

## **5. Programmatic Capability and Past Performance**

### **5.a Programmatic Capability**

If awarded, the **VBCBRA** will be ultimately responsible for the implementation and management of the Hazardous Substances and Petroleum Assessment Grant and to ensure the timely and successful expenditure of funds and completion of all technical, administrative, and financial requirements under the grant. These activities are conducted under the direction of the **project manager** Mr. Edward VanderVries, Ms. Lisa Phillips, the VBCBRA Chair, and the VBCBRA Board. Mr. Edward VanderVries, Director of Land Services Van Buren County Government - U.S. EPA Brownfield Petroleum Assessment Grant Proposal and Project Director has managed the grant application processes through the Van Buren County. Mr. VanderVries has experience managing numerous grants over the last eight years. The other key players include: Karen MaKay-County Treasurer; Karen MacDonald-Deputy Treasurer, and Lisa Boer-Land Services Department. The department has the support of seven full-time staff and available legal counsel. The department has written and released numerous Requests for Proposals and Request for Qualifications, negotiated and approved contracts, participated in mediation sessions, and carried out the implementation tasks for various grants, loans, contracts, and development projects.

If awarded a Hazardous Substances and Petroleum Assessment Grant, the County anticipates using information from this process to select a qualified consultant which meets the requirements of the Cooperative Agreement. Additionally, the above-noted support group, i.e., **County Staff** and the **VBCBRA Board** is prepared to implement the Fiscal Year 2014 Hazardous Substances and 2014 Petroleum Assessment Grants. Many of the tools, policies, guidance materials, applications, etc., can be easily adapted to a new grant and will allow the VBCBRA to immediately begin implementation.

Although the VBCBRA has never received U.S. EPA Assessment Grant Funding, the **County Staff** and **Board** (our current Programmatic Team) has successfully implemented three U.S. EPA Brownfield Assessment Grants previously awarded directly to the County, leveraged upwards of \$16 million dollars in Private Investment, and created almost 350 jobs; in addition to numerous successful environmental assessments (Phase I/II ESA, BEA, Due Care) and Brownfield Plans.

### **5.b Audit Findings**

The VBCBRA has no adverse audit findings. In conjunction with the County, we dutifully filed quarterly reports, Annual Reports, Property Profile Sheets, and quality assurance Project Plans for the U.S. EPA Brownfield Assessment Grants previously awarded directly to the County; as opposed to the VBCBRA.

### **5.c Past Performance and Accomplishments**

#### **1. Purpose and Accomplishments**

The VBCBRA has never received a U.S. EPA Brownfield Grant. However, the VBCBRA Board members have successfully managed other assistance agreements awarded to Van Buren County over the years. Mr. Edward VanderVries, Van Buren County Director of Equalization and Project Director, has extensive experience managing cooperative agreements from past U.S. EPA Brownfield Assessment Grants through the Van Buren County. One VBCBRA member serves on the City of South Haven Brownfield Redevelopment Authority and has leveraged additional State and Federal funding. Some of these Highlights include:

#### 2013 Michigan Department of Natural Resources Emergency Dredging Grant - \$296,000.00

The City of South Haven was awarded \$296,000.00 to assist in the Dredging Efforts in the Black River (1/2 mile from **Target Area**). Low water levels and high silt levels in the Black River called for the need to use Emergency Dredging Funding from the State of Michigan. The Emergency Dredging was completed in June of 2013 by the Army Corps of Engineers.



#### 2012 Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant - \$217,400.00

Van Buren County received \$217,400.00 in funding from the State, as well as \$145,000 match from the County, to develop a multi-use trail. Primary focuses of the grants included: improvement of trailhead parking lots, design of trail system, protection of natural resources, signage, benches and a bike rack. Trail efforts continue, however, the 36.6-mile multi-use rail-to-trail from Kalamazoo to South Haven experiences improvements to its year-round trail. The rail-to-trail used an existing rail bed of a former rail line that operated in the early 1900's and brought passengers from Kalamazoo to South Haven. The trail intersects through our target areas and continues to expand and productively reuse property in the County, as well as connecting communities and improving recreation opportunities.

#### 2011 Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund - \$340,000

Van Buren County received \$254,000 in funding from the State as well as a \$85,000 match, including new basketball courts, new sidewalk, remodeled restrooms, new benches, picnic tables, and trash cans. New fencing and landscaping on the west side of the park is also part of the South Haven vision, or plan. Projects were completed in early 2012.

#### 2009 U.S. EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant Hazardous Substance Assessment Grant

Van Buren County was awarded \$200,000 which was used in concert with the 2007 Petroleum Assessment Grant. The grant was used to identify sites with potential contamination from hazardous substances and to conduct Phase I and II ESAs, BEAs, Due Care Planning and cleanup planning at multiple sites within communities including: the Village of Gobles, the Village of Bangor, the Village of Mattawan, the Village of Lawrence, and the City of South Haven. 2009 Hazardous Substances Assessment Grant funds were utilized to prepare a promotional video detailing tools available through the VCBRA to support redevelopment throughout Van Buren County. With the assistance of U.S. EPA personnel from Region 5 the video was subsequently dubbed into Spanish to support outreach efforts to the significant Hispanic population located in Van Buren County.

#### 2010 U.S. EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant - Petroleum Assessment Grant

Van Buren County was awarded \$200,000 which permitted continuing support of existing Brownfield project sites and expansion of VCBRA activities to additional sites not previously assessed. The limited 2010 funds remaining have been allocated for the completion of assessment activities and preparation of Brownfield Plans at sites within multiple communities in the County. The preparation of the Brownfield Plans will leverage private investment in the sites and promote a sustainable program by providing funds that will be available for future assessment of sites throughout Van Buren County. The limited remaining 2010 Assessment funds will be fully utilized.

### **2. Compliance with Grant Requirements**

As a past recipient of numerous State and Federal Grants, the VCBRA understands that monitoring progress will be necessary by submitting quarterly reports, MBE/WBE requirements, ACRES entries (on a per project basis), federal financial forms, and grant closeouts, to the EPA. The VCBRA will track **outcomes** including the amount of private investment leveraged by the grant, jobs created, jobs retained, acres of land reused, and other factors that indicate progress toward our goals and those of the EPA. This information will also be regularly updated in the Assessment, Cleanup, Redevelopment and Exchange System (ACRES) as required by the EPA. Additionally, the VCBRA has developed guidelines to insure that projects proposed to use grant funds will have the outcomes of protecting human health and the environment, preservation of open space, sustainable development practices and other important considerations. As the VCBRA implements Brownfield Plans, the county can track the amount of potential tax increment captured and available for future sites. This information will also be located on the counties website accessible to the residents, County, and the general public.

**Attachment A – Letter from the State**



RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
LANSING



DAN WYANT  
DIRECTOR

December 17, 2013

Mr. Edward VanderVries  
Director of Land Services  
219 Paw Paw Street, Suite 302  
Paw Paw, Michigan 49079

Dear Mr. VanderVries:

SUBJECT: Acknowledgment Regarding the United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Brownfield Assessment Grant Proposals

Thank you for your notice and request for a letter of acknowledgment for the Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority's (VBCBRA) proposals to the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) brownfield grant program. The Department of Environmental Quality, Remediation and Redevelopment Division (RRD), is supportive of county-wide redevelopment efforts and has reviewed the information you provided regarding your proposals.

The VBCBRA is applying for a \$200,000 hazardous substances assessment grant and a \$200,000 petroleum assessment grant, both of which can be used to conduct environmental assessment activities at eligible brownfield sites throughout the county. The VBCBRA is considered eligible for these grants as an economic development agent of a general purpose unit of local government.

Should the EPA award these brownfield grants to the VBCBRA, it would promote redevelopment and reuse of underutilized and contaminated properties and improve the economic development and environmental conditions in the county. If you need further information or assistance regarding specific brownfield sites, please contact Mr. Ron Smedley, Brownfield Redevelopment Coordinator, RRD, at 517-284-5153, or you may contact me.

Sincerely,

Carrie Geyer, Chief  
Brownfield Redevelopment Unit  
Program Support Section  
Remediation and Redevelopment Division  
517-284-5182

cc: Ms. Jan Pels, USEPA Region 5  
Mr. Ron Smedley, DEQ

## **Attachment B – Threshold Criteria**

### Threshold Criteria for Assessment Grant

#### **Applicant – Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (VBCBRA), Michigan**

##### *1. Applicant Eligibility*

The Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (VBCBRA) is a redevelopment agency that is fully sanctioned by the State of Michigan under the authority of Public Act 381 of 1996, the Brownfield Redevelopment Financing Act. The Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority, created by resolution in June 2002, was established under MCL 125.2651 et al. The independent authority is governed by a nine (9) member board appointed by the County Board of Commissioners. The authority is responsible for promoting the revitalization, redevelopment, and reuse of certain properties. The Resolution was filed with the Secretary of State on June 3, 2002.

##### *2. Letter from the State of Michigan*

The VBCBRA received a letter from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) acknowledging the County's plan to conduct assessment activities through the pursuit of Federal grant funds. Please refer to attached letter.

##### *3. Community Involvement*

As Van Buren County seeks to recover from the slow economic times that have put the **target communities'** businesses and environment at risk, it is imperative that the redevelopment of these **target areas** contains a high level of community **input**. Participation from the residents of the City of South Haven and Village of Paw Paw target areas have been, are and will continue to be of great importance. Many strides have already been taken in developing plans for these communities. Past visioning sessions were held to discuss issues in the **target areas**. In the Village of Paw Paw, 35 participants assisted in a discussion to produce a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis and developed planning principles for the target area. This included several meetings with the group and follow-up activities by the planning commission, DDA and Village Board. For the City of South Haven target area, City, City BRA, property owners and tenants, and the MDEQ are already at the table discussing issues to be addressed and potential resolutions. Activities like this will continue under **Task 5** in the budget and are of crucial importance to leverage the work already completed. During the project, citizens and community organizations will have ample opportunity to become informed and provide input on developments during the revitalization. The VBCBRA plans to continue to engage local leaders, residents, community organizations, and local businesses during area-wide planning activities in their respective communities, accomplishing this through existing relationships and support from partners. As part of the outreach program, meetings with supporting communities, grant partners, etc., will discuss the grants and provide an opportunity to learn more about brownfield challenges and opportunities.

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various local newspapers to educate the County's citizens. The *South Haven Tribune* and the *Paw Paw Courier Leader* have the largest circulation in the County. The County also used and will continue to use media that assists with communicating to the Latino population, such as the newspaper *Nueva Opinion*, widely read by Latinos in southwest Michigan, and the "Tejano-Mex Super Show" (FM 103.7), a radio program with news and music for the Latino community. Van Buren typically uses these publications to disseminate their public notices and press releases to the County-wide population. The VCBRA has also published trifold documents on the VCBRA in Spanish. Likewise, the VCBRA completed an informative video in English and Spanish on the VCBRA and the tools and resources that are available. We also publicize programs and successes through newsletters, the County Website ([www.vbco.com](http://www.vbco.com)), inserts, accompanying tax and utility bills, and have considered exploring new forms of social networking.

The VCBRA meets monthly on a regularly scheduled date to review and approve projects, solicit public comment and plan for future activities. Currently, the VCBRA is planning a community-wide open house, including a representative from the MDEQ, to discuss redevelopment alternatives and strategies for using additional funding available from the State for the Paw Paw and South Haven **Target Areas**. This open house will allow realtors, developers, local units of government, neighborhood groups and other affected stakeholders an opportunity to understand the distribution of sites within their community, solicit other sites and educate attendees on the merits of redevelopment and the tools and resources available.

4. Site Eligibility and Property Ownership Eligibility

Since this application is a community-wide proposal, this section is not applicable

## **Attachment C – Letters of Support from Community-Based Organizations**



216 West Michigan Avenue  
Paw Paw Michigan, 49079  
[www.greaterpawpaw.biz.com](http://www.greaterpawpaw.biz.com)

January 8, 2014

Ed VanderVries, Director of Land Services  
Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority  
219 Paw Paw St., Suite 302  
Paw Paw, Michigan 49079

Dear Mr. VanderVries

We are writing to express support for the FY 2014 EPA Brownfield Hazardous Substance and Petroleum Assessment Grant application which the Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (VBCBRA) is preparing.

It is our understanding that the funding, if available, would include the entire county of Van Buren. This is of interest to us as our membership is primarily from the Gobles, Mattawan, Lawton, Lawrence, Decatur, and Paw Paw areas of Van Buren. We understand the benefits of the program can assist prospective purchasers as well as business owners as they have a desire to expand or purchase property.

As our home base is in Paw Paw, we are particularly interested in the partnership with the Village of Paw Paw. Several of us participated in the EPA Technical Assistance to Brownfield (TAB) session which helped develop a vision for the old industrial area Paw Paw. It was agreed this area would offer a great opportunity for the future. The vision was exciting to all. Currently, the Village is working on the strategy necessary to bring about the vision. We believe the grant could be a great asset in moving the vision forward.

The Greater Paw Paw Business Network could be a partner in helping educate and reach out to the community in which our members serve. We offer opportunities to meet with businesses, market properties and serve as ambassadors for the grant opportunities. We offer our website as a link to your efforts.

We fully support the efforts of the VBCBRA and look forward to improvement in economic activity in our community.

Sincerely,



Melody Mechum  
President



**Village of Paw Paw**  
**Downtown Development Authority**  
**Economic Development Committee**

DDA: 129 South Kalamazoo Street, Paw Paw, MI 49079  
EDC: 111 East Michigan Avenue, PO Box 179; Paw Paw, MI 49079

January 8, 2014

Ed VanderVries, Director of Land Services  
Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority  
219 Paw Paw St., Suite 302  
Paw Paw, Michigan 49079

Dear Mr. VanderVries

We write on behalf of the Village of Paw Paw Economic Development Committee (EDC) and the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to express our wholehearted support for the FY 2014 EPA Brownfield Hazardous Substance and Petroleum Assessment Grant application which the Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (VBCBRA) is preparing.

The VBCBRA has been very successful with prior grants and we are convinced they will be equally successful with this grant. We urge you to give their application careful review. We believe such a review will show great potential Countywide and, in particular, assisting the fulfillment of the vision the Village of Paw Paw's has developed for its old industrial district.

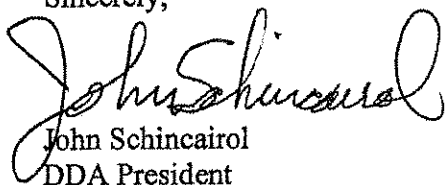
Thanks to the EPA's Technical Assistance for Brownfields (TAB), the Village sponsored an EPA TAB visioning session in which we and many others participated. The result was an exciting and realistic vision for the old industrial district which would offer a great opportunity for the future.

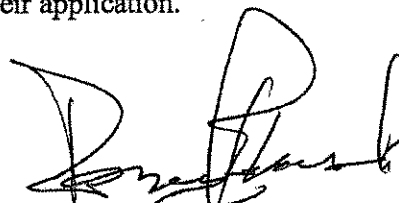
To achieve this vision, the EDC and the DDA both have supported and financially contributed to the development of an overlay district incorporating the resulting vision from the EPA TAB program. The Village's Planning Commission is currently working on the amendment to the Village's zoning code to include this district, the concepts of which we and the Village have supported. Both of us, the DDA and the EDC, have approved the overlay district because of its potential and its connections with our historic downtown and our natural assets (Paw Paw River, Maple Lake, and Briggs Pond) that are included in the plan. We believe the grant could be a great asset in moving the vision and these forward.

The EDC and the DDA can assist the VBCBRA by providing a venue to educate community members about Brownfield development, educational communications to our business community. This can include paid advertising (print and broadcast), flyers, direct email promotions, through the DDA's website ([uncorkpawpaw.com](http://uncorkpawpaw.com)) and through the DDA's Facebook page (Uncork Paw Paw).

We look forward to your favorable review to their application.

Sincerely,

  
John Schincairol  
DDA President

  
Roman Piaszczak  
EDC Chairman

# Village of Paw Paw

Larry Nielsen, Village Manager

111 East Michigan Avenue, PO Box 179; Paw Paw, MI 49079

Phone: 269-657-3148 // Fax: 269-657-7544

Website: <http://www.pawpaw.net> // Email: [l.nielsen@pawpaw.net](mailto:l.nielsen@pawpaw.net)

January 8, 2014

Ed VanderVries, Director of Land Services  
Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority  
219 Paw Paw St., Suite 302  
Paw Paw, Michigan 49079

Dear Mr. VanderVries

On behalf of the Village Council, I write to express support for the FY 2014 EPA Brownfield Hazardous Substance and Petroleum Assessment Grant application which the Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (VBCBRA) is preparing. We understand the benefits of the program can assist prospective purchasers as well as business owners who have a desire to expand or purchase property.

Thanks to the EPA, the Village sponsored the EPA Technical Assistance to Brownfield (TAB) session which helped develop a vision for the old industrial area Paw Paw. It was agreed this area would offer a great opportunity for the future.

The vision was exciting to all. Currently, the Village is working on the strategy necessary to bring about the vision. Our Planning Commission has developed overlay district which meets the resulting vision from the EPA TAB program. Our zoning code is being amended to include this district. The Planning Commission, the Downtown Development Authority, and the Village Council have approved the overlay district. Connections to the historic downtown and the natural assets are included in the plan. We believe the grant could be a great asset in moving the vision and these forward.

The Village remains committed to assisting the VBCBRA by providing a venue to educate community members about Brownfield development. We can also assist through our communication network which include flyers, Facebook postings, direct email, and utility billing inserts to our 3,100+ households and businesses.

We fully support the efforts of the VBCBRA and look forward to improvement in economic activity in our community.

Sincerely,



Larry Nielsen  
Manager



## VAN BUREN CONSERVATION DISTRICT

January 13, 2014

Mr. Ed VanderVries, Director – CMAE III, PPE  
Department of Land Services  
Van Buren County  
219 E. Paw Paw Street, Suite 302

Re: U.S. EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant

Dear Mr. VanderVries:

The Van Buren County Conservation District would like to show its support for the Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority's (VBCBRA) attempt for the U.S. EPA Community-Wide Brownfield Assessment grants.

The Conservation District is available to provide technical assistance to public and private landowners on a variety of topics including proper resource recovery for residents, farmland conservation practices, wildlife habitat enhancement, storm water protection, native landscaping, and stream bank and wetland restoration. The Conservation District can also connect key stakeholders to issues related to best management practices, conservation technical assistance, equipment rentals, and environmental stewardship.

The Conservation District is committed to assisting the VBCBRA in accomplishing the goals and objectives of this grant. Our involvement with the program is consistent our mission and the work we do in the Van Buren County. We have been leaders in providing education, research and conservation programs to our community. The Van Buren Conservation Districts would like to provide the in-kind service of \$500.00 to help provide outreach and promotion of meetings, workshops and events that provide awareness of Brownfield Activities and Properties in our County and projects the VBCBRA are working on.

The Van Buren County Conservation District firmly believes in serving, educating, and empowering our community for natural resources protection and the local people should make decisions on conservation issues at the local level. We will assist the VBCBRA in their efforts to organize, plan, and conduct Community Outreach sessions related to Brownfield Activities.

We look forward to working with VBCBRA on this project that will benefit our entire community

Sincerely,

A.J. Brucks,  
Executive Director

1035 E. Michigan Avenue, Paw Paw, Michigan 49079  
Phone 269.657.4030 x5 ♦ Fax 269.657.4925  
[WWW.VANBURENCD.ORG](http://WWW.VANBURENCD.ORG)



**VAN BUREN INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**VBISD.org**

**Jeffrey C. Mills**  
Superintendent

November 20, 2013

Ed VanderVries  
Director of Land Services  
291 Paw Paw St. Suite, 302  
Paw Paw, MI 49079

Re: U.S. EPA Brownfield Hazardous Substances and Petroleum Assessment Grant

Dear Ed,

Please us this letter of support for the "Fiscal Year 2014 EPA Brownfield Hazardous Substances and Petroleum Assessment Grant Application" that is being submitted by the Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority. The Van Buren Intermediate School District would like to offer many supporting services for this grant opportunity.

One of the offerings that I would like to make available to you is the use of our conference center at no cost. This conference center can accommodate up to 300 community members and is centrally located in Van Buren County to hold community information sessions out all the benefits of Brownfield Redevelopment and the various tools and incentives that are available. The second offering that I can make available to you is the translating of educational materials into Spanish. We have a number of staff members on site that can assist with this need.

The Van Buren Intermediate School District can also provide the use of our Business Development Coordinator that we have on staff to assist in getting out the message to the various businesses the opportunities that Brownfield Redevelopment Programs can provide.

If you need further information about Van Buren Intermediate School District and the resources that we can bring to the table to support this grant, I would be more than happy to have this conversation.

Feel free to contact me at 269-674-8091.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeffrey C. Mills', is written over the typed name and title.  
Jeffrey C. Mills  
Superintendent

490 South Paw Paw Street, Lawrence MI 49064 • Phone: 269.674.8091  
Special Services Fax: 269.539.5009 • VBTC Fax: 269.674.8954 • VBISD Conference Center Fax: 269.674.8030  
Michigan Relay Center 1.800.649.3777 (Voice and TDD)

It is the policy of the Van Buren Intermediate School District that no discriminatory practices based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, height, weight, marital status, disability, genetic information or any other status covered by federal, state, or local law be allowed during any program, activity, service, or in employment. Inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies should be directed to the Director of Finance & Operations or Building Principals, 490 S. Paw Paw Street, Lawrence, MI 49064, 269-674-8091.



## Telamon Corporation

416 North Cedar Street  
Lansing, MI 48912  
Phone: (517)323-7002  
Fax: (517)323-9840  
Email: dkuchnicki@telamon.org

January 9, 2014

Mr. Ed VanderVries, Director – CMAE III, PPE  
Department of Land Services  
Van Buren County  
219 E. Paw Paw Street, Suite 302

Re: U.S. EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant

Dear Mr. VanderVries:

Telamon Corporation is pleased to support the 2014 EPA Hazardous Substance and Petroleum Assessment Grant Application made by the Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority. (VBCBRA)

Telamon Corporation values bringing human services to people and communities statewide as our purpose is to improve the lives of those in need. We accomplish this by reaching out and acting as a valuable resource for farmworkers and their families as well as and other groups with special needs. Telamon Corporation provides head start services, emergency assistance and job training and placement opportunities. As the Hispanic/Latino population is growing in Van Buren County, partly due to agricultural opportunities, our organization has been able to disseminate and translate information about economic and social development opportunities.

The Assessment Grants will help facilitate our mission by creating job opportunities for sensitive populations and offer opportunities in our "Head Start," and our "Employment and Training" programs. Whether it is starting a business, expanding a business or assisting with neighborhood community centers, Brownfield sites present opportunities for property development through Brownfield tools and incentives available through the VBCBRA. Additionally, Brownfield redevelopments helps eliminate blighted, contaminated or abandoned sites which tend to be located in low-income areas throughout our communities.

We appreciate the opportunity to work with the VBCBRA and will be pleased to have the VBCBRA receive this grant to assist in our joint efforts to make our county a safe and vibrant community. If you have any questions, or if I can be of assistance, please contact me at (269) 655-9916 Ext. 1256

Sincerely,  
Telamon Corporation

Donald T. Kuchnicki  
State Director  
Telamon Corporation



## SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN PLANNING COMMISSION

185 East Main Street, Suite 701, Benton Harbor, MI 49022

Phone: 269-925-1137 • Website: [www.swmpc.org](http://www.swmpc.org)

January 8, 2014

Mr. Ed VanderVries  
Department of Economic Development  
Van Buren County  
219 E. Paw Paw, Suite 303  
Paw Paw, Michigan 49079-1423

Re: U.S. EPA Brownfield Hazardous Substances and Petroleum Assessment Grant Application

Dear Mr. VanderVries:

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) is pleased to know that the Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (VBCBRA) is applying for a Fiscal Year 2014 U.S. EPA Brownfield Hazardous Substance and Petroleum Assessment Grant. SWMPC will assist the VCBRA with communicating the benefits of addressing brownfield sites to citizens of our County and the local units of government therein, as part of our planning activities. Additionally, we would like to offer development strategies based on our **2013 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy** vision; "to cultivate a resilient, sustainable, and globally-competitive knowledge-based economy across southwest Michigan that supports an improved quality of life and builds pathways to prosperity for residents." The benefits of brownfield redevelopment can contribute to enhanced watershed management, farmland and openspace preservation and the creation of trails and greenways in the target areas. Hopefully by educating various stakeholders about brownfields, together we can demonstrate that a brownfield site is a viable option versus developing a greenfield site; or how abandoned, potentially contaminated sites could be contributing to the degradation of watersheds and future development opportunities for a community.

We fully support and wish you the best in your efforts to receive this EPA Hazardous Substance Brownfield Assessment Grant and we will be honored to partner with the VBCBRA to promote sustainable development and effective reuse of our properties and infrastructure within Van Buren County. If you have any questions, or if I can be of assistance, please contact me at (269) 925-1137.

Very truly yours,

K. John Egelhaaf  
Executive Director



Mr. Ed VanderVries, Director – CMAE III, PPE  
Department of Land Services  
Van Buren County  
219 E. Paw Paw Street, Suite 302

January 8, 2014

Re: U.S. EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant

Dear Mr. VanderVries:

The Greater South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce is pleased to support the 2014 EPA Hazardous Substance and Petroleum Assessment Grant Application made by the Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (VBCBRA).

Fundamental to the Chamber's core mission is our ability to support economic growth and promote opportunities in the target areas of Paw Paw and South Haven. We will inform members as well as the business community about existing brownfield sites and the potential benefits and incentives available through the VBCBRA. We believe this will support the mission while enhancing sustainability and revitalization of the communities we represent. We will also work with business owners or prospective purchasers in the target area to redevelop the Eagle Street Properties.

Integral to our economic development efforts is our ability to submerge the region in a new small business development initiative called the Black River Area Center for Entrepreneurship (BRACE) which serves Van Buren County and the geography of the Black River Watershed and Kalamazoo River. This initiative is founded on the principals of regional collaboration and the development of partnerships. Our relationship with the County and our ability to communicate redevelopment opportunities regarding contaminated, blighted, or abandoned sites will be mutually beneficial and will provide an additional avenue to encourage small business development throughout the county. Together we will work to transform our local communities, diversify our regional economy, re-engineer our competitive advantage in developing, attracting, and retaining businesses in Van Buren County.

The Greater South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce strongly supports the application made by the VBCBRA for a 2014 EPA Hazardous Substances and Petroleum Assessment Grant. We look forward to working with the County in enhancing economic prosperity in the region.

Sincerely,

South Haven Area Chamber of Commerce

Kathy L. Wagaman

**SERVING COMMUNITIES – LAKESIDE & COUNTRYSIDE**

606 Phillips Street, South Haven, MI 49090 | Ph: 269.637.5171 | Fax: 269.639.1570 | [www.southhavenmi.com](http://www.southhavenmi.com)

November 11, 2013

Mr. Edward VanderVries  
Director of Land Services  
Van Buren County  
219 Paw Paw Street, Suite 302  
Paw Paw, MI 49079

RE: 2014 EPA Hazardous Substance Brownfield Assessment Grant

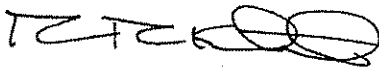
Dear Mr. VanderVries,

Southwest Michigan First (SMF), the regional economic development organization that provides support services for Van Buren County, is pleased to provide a letter of support for an application for the above referenced grant to the Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (VBCBRA).

Southwest Michigan First will be a partner with the VBCBRA to market and present existing Brownfield Sites to Companies that may be looking to expand, relocate or invest in Van Buren County. The VBCBRA works with SMF and their potential prospects to educate them on the benefits and incentives that are available on Brownfield sites and how the VBCBRA can make them come to fruition. In most cases this assistance will make or break a project on what could be a challenging site.

We look forward to an ongoing partnership to build a stronger economy in Van Buren County and the surrounding area.

Regards



Ron Kitchens  
chief executive officer



# City of Hartford

19 West Main St. • Hartford, Michigan 49057



Telephone: (269) 621-2477

Fax: (269) 621-2054

www.hartfordmi.com

January 13, 2014

Ed VanderVries  
Director  
Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority  
219 PawPaw Street, Suite 302  
PawPaw, Michigan 49079.

Dear Mr. VanderVries:

We are writing to express support for the FY2014 EPA Brownfield Hazardous Substance and Petroleum Assessment Grant Application which the Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (VBCBRA) is preparing.

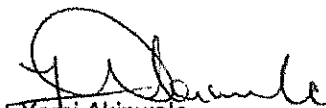
The City of Hartford has partnered with the County's Brownfield Redevelopment Authority because of our inability to fund certain projects that have Brownfield issues. The City has 10(ten) sites on the Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality sites of known contamination (Part201); all of which are deterrents to redevelopment. Our small population and size make marketing these properties difficult and we look to the VBCBRA as a means of aiding in the marketing and developing some of our problem areas.

Having created a relationship with the County and its Brownfield Redevelopment Authority we hope we can benefit from becoming a destination due to our proximity to a major interstate, and a connection with major Midwestern population centers, by redeveloping sites and utilizing the County's funding. In 2009 we were fortunate enough to receive a Blueprint for Michigan's Downtown technical assistance program from Michigan State Housing Development Authority, to work on marketing and to strengthen the community's vision. We have also developed an Interstate 94 Economic Development Plan that highlights the I-94 Corridor for future economic development. We hope that additional funding and assistance with planning can aid us in making a large economic development impact.

As a local unit of government, the City of Hartford, could be a partner in utilizing the City's resources towards investment in the community in which our members serve. We offer opportunities to meet with businesses, market properties and serve as ambassadors for grant opportunities. We offer our website as a link to community members and businesses.

We fully support the efforts of the VBCBRA and look forward to improvement in economic activity in our community.

Sincerely,



Yemi Akinwale  
City Manager

## **Attachment D – Other Factors Checklist**

### Appendix 3

#### Other Factors Checklist

Name of Applicant: Van Buren County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority

Please identify (with an **X**) which, if any of the below items apply to your community or your project as described in your proposal. To be considered for an Other Factor, you must include the page number where each applicable factor is discussed in your proposal. EPA will verify these disclosures prior to selection and may consider this information during the selection process. If this information is not clearly discussed in your narrative proposal or in any other attachments, it will not be considered during the selection process.

- ☐ Community population is 10,000 or less
- ☐ Federally recognized Indian tribe
- ☐ United States territory
- ☐ Applicant will assist a Tribe or territory
- ☐ Targeted brownfield sites are impacted by mine-scarred land
- ☐ Targeted brownfield sites are contaminated with controlled substances
- ☐ Recent natural disaster(s) (2006 or later) occurred within community, causing significant community economic and environmental distress.
- ☒ Project is primarily focusing on Phase II assessments – **Page #8**  
*Continuing assessment grant funding will utilize 64% or \$256,000 from the total (\$400,000) budget on sixteen (16) Phase II Environmental Site Assessments.*
- ☐ Applicant demonstrates firm leveraging commitments for facilitating brownfield project completion by identifying amounts and contributors of funding in the proposal and have included documentation.
- ☒ Community experiencing plant closures (or other significant economic disruptions) (2008 or later) tied to the targeted brownfield sites or project area, including communities experiencing auto plant closures due to bankruptcy or economic disruptions. – **Page #1, #3, and #4. See also attached WARN Data and Documentation.**
- ☐ Recent (2008 or later) significant economic disruption (unrelated to a natural disaster or manufacturing/auto plant closure) has occurred within community, resulting in a significant percentage loss of community jobs and tax base.
- ☐ Applicant is a recipient or a core partner of a HUD-DOT-EPA Partnership for Sustainable Communities (PSC) grant that is directly tied to the project area, and can demonstrate that funding from a PSC grant has or will benefit the project area. To be considered, **applicant must attach documentation** which demonstrates this connection to a HUD-DOT-EPA PSC grant.
- ☐ Applicant is a recipient of an EPA Brownfields Area-Wide Planning grant
- ☐ Community is implementing green remediation plans.
- ☐ Climate Change (also add to "V.D. Other Factors")

Company Name	City	Date Received	Incident Type	Number of Layoffs
Welch Foods, Inc.	Lawton	06/28/2011	Mass Layoff	121
Masonico, LLC	Mattawan	01/15/2010	Other	24
AEES Automotive Engineering Plastics	Mattawan	04/12/2010	Other	11
AEES Automotive Engineering Plastics	Mattawan	08/16/2010	Other	4
AEES Automotive Engineering Plastics	Mattawan	11/20/2009	Plant Closing	372
Noble International	South Haven	4/3/2009	Plant Closing	300

\*Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget

WARN (Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification) Data from 01/01/2009-1/14/2014

**Plant closing:** A covered employer must give notice if an employment site (or one or more facilities or operating units within an employment site) will be shut down and the shutdown will result in an employment loss\* for 50 or more employees during any 30-day period.

**Mass layoff:** A covered employer must give notice if there is to be a mass layoff which does not result from a business closing, but will result in an employment loss\* at the employment site during any 30-day period for 500 or more employees, or for 50-499 employees if they make up at least 33% of the employer's active workforce.

**Other:** Indicates less than a 50 employee layoff.